Hi. Thanks for answering my call for people to interview about Flash games. I have a bunch of questions outlined below and the more in-depth your answers, the better, but please don’t feel pressured to answer every one of them.

Please note in this list of questions: when I ask you about “Flash games” specifically, I mean the ones released in-browser between 1999 and 2021. If you’re still making games with Flash, great! I’d like to hear about it. But since this book is mainly focused on Flash games in the browser, I’d like answers based around that context.

Personal History

- **Tell me about yourself.**
  My name is Chaz Carter. I'm 32 years old and I'm from the UK. I am currently in Vietnam as I write this however. I have been developing video games for a little over 15 years, and I registered myself as full time independent in 2009. I started out learning code and switched to art, but the experience in both helps me when working on a solo project. I used to put out my work under the name FlashChaz but I've changed this to just using either my name or MadeByChaz.
- **What Flash games did you make?**
  I've shipped well over 50 games since going full time independent. I got my break with my first viral Flash game The Gun Game, made with Nicolas Picouet. After this, I made a sequel to TGG, started the Bazooki series with Marsh Games, and entered my game Once Upon A Life into IGF 2014 (which I also worked on with Marsh Games). I made Wolfgang Fights The Future, cloneSPACE and Welcome To Winkletown with CKPEngine. Peppered among these releases are a slew of other collaborations and solo projects I used to learn code including Hero Agency, Super Idle Imagination, Bubble Boy
- **How else were you involved in the Flash community?**
- When I first launched my website I useed to write a lot of articles, tutorials and put some .fla files up for download. These weren't anythng too advanced however so I took a step back from that to try to learn more.
- **What was your first Flash game that you played, and on what site?**
  My earliest memory of playing a web game is of something I **believe** was called 'Battle Trolls'. In the 90's I used to go up to the library and connect to the internet for 1 hour to log on to this website and fight my brother with these character cards. After this, I remember Miniclip's original Heli Attack game (which blew my mind for a web game!), CoFlash's Ray Series and some early point and click Newgrounds stuff. So Miniclip and Newgrounds really opened my eyes to Flash, although there was a little website called Mousebreaker I used to enjoy when I was younger too, as it only featured games that were played with the mouse and I liked that aspect.
- **What do you remember about the community? How they interacted,**

voted, shared games with eachother?
I remember Newgrounds being the perfect place to hone your craft if you were new to Flash. Their Blam system was brutal and it was being exposed to home truths about how bad your stuff was that was always the impetus to imrpove. An award was always the goal for me, which I got with an animation, and then it was my games that started to get the coveted Frontpage spot. I do remember back in the day that there were some incredibly talented helpers on the BBS who were happy to send back and forth .fla files over MSN Messenger to fix problems, send it back and explain the code fixes. (Massive shout out to Lexus here!). This open collaboration style was imperative to helping understand the very basic working of ActionScript 2 which ultimately transpired to be my gateway language.

- **What are your favorite Flash games? Both massive and obscure.**
- I enjoyed the 'McDonalds Videogame' from Molleindustria because it was the kind of thing that made me realise what you can actually do in Flash. I remember it feeling like a fully featured PC game. Emulating the Stickman Sam (Crazy Monkey Games) keyboard movement with mouse aiming was the thing that I set as my AS2 development goal. Every time I booted up Flash I was trying to code this mechanic so I could make my own game similar to Stickman Sam, so for a few reasons that's a big favourite of mine. Another standout is the Ray series from Phil at CoFlash. I feel like it knows how obvious it's inspiration was and leant into it, and it almost felt like playing a really well produced South Park mini-game. I was always excited for part 3 but I don't know what happened!
- **What was your favorite portal and why? Any runner-ups?**
  Without a doubt it's Newgrounds for me all the way. It's always been completely unrestrained and gone against the grain; NG has always been a bustling hive of creative talent which attracted a very unique community, making it (in my humble opinion) the internet's punk rock movement. Many creative people who started with Newgrounds moved into other areas including the videogame industry proper, and I feel that it's not an absurd thing to say that it shaped a generation through the content it offered (and the promise of helping you create your own).

- As I progressed in my career and got to work with publishers I looked up to, I found Miniclip to be an incredible company to work with and I was honoured to do so in consideration of their earlier games shaping my desire to use Flash. They were the first publisher I remember who sent a style guide asking for specific things for certain reasons that to this day inform elements of my design philosophy.
- **What would you consider your strongest memory of Flash gaming? It**

doesn’t have to be necessarily the best.

- Probably from my own point of view, being approached by The Cartoon Network to make a game for one of their flagship TV shows and specifically being asked to use my art style. The game had a commerical running on U.S TV as well, but I have trouble finding it online now. Another thing that comes to mind is getting calls from publishers in other countries and getting crazy job offers in Dubai around the time The Gun Game 2 was looking for a publisher. Flash was kind of at it's peak at this time and I remember seeing certain games being licensed for six figures before it hit a downward spiral. Seeing games like Alien Hominid being released on consoles was a massive point of inspiration for me. I was about 13 or 14 when that came out and I remember looking at Dan's artwork on the box and I knew that was made in Flash. I thought if I worked hard enough, one day I might be able to go to the store and see my artwork on the boxart for a game I made!
- **Do you remember any portals, users or general stories that a casual community member might not know of? I’d love to get some more obscure stories into the book.**
- One issue that was rampant was piracy. More often than not this was happening for the Chinese market or resale. They would download the .swf file of a game, decompile it to create a master asset, rip out any branding, links, credits or sponsorship, and on occasion replace one or two art assets to either fit their website or seek a new license sale. This happened to myself with the aforementioned pixelBOMB game; I decompiled the Chinese version to find my unused art assets still present in the library. In that case I was able to contact the sponsor, who was unaware, and managed to get some compensation. This felt like an exception to the rule however; I feel like many developers were ripped off and never saw any recompence.
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- An amazing artist called JunkyardSame got in touch with me via email to ask for some tips on my aforementioned pixelBOMB game. I was linked to his portfolio and saw that he was an artist on a few AAA games including some of my favourites. After talking for a bit we made a game based on pixelBOMB''s gameplay called FarmBee (which I'm honoured to say was one of the first games to ever use the Newgrounds Medal API after Tom Fulp got in touch about it).
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- A while ago, JunkyardSam was sending out pre-release versions of a game he'd made, and one of the publishers who saw it was King.com. King made a bid for the game but Sam ultimately rejected the offer in favour of another. King.com had so many resources at the time that they hired somebody to clone Sam's game before he got it to market. This was at the height of Candy Crush's popularity, so it was bizarre to see a company worth billions dip in to this little

independent Flash game space to mine it for the next potential hit. This was pretty well publicized at the time but it's worth mentioning again because shady things like this happened all the time to hard working developers and struggling artists.

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- **Overall, what is your favorite part of Flash games, major or minor?**
- How easy it was to make something in your bedroom and get it on a platform for thousands and sometimes millions of people to see. Accessibility was also key; Flash was a great launchpad for getting into developing games in general, and learning the do's and dont's of game design early on.

Developing for Flash

- **What made you consider developing a Flash game?**
- The possibility of being able to make your own interactive game, something I'd wanted to do forever. It also seemed more accessible than GameMaker to me at that point.
- **How difficult was it for you to get started?**
- Thankfully there were a few tutorials on Newgrounds at the time and a handful of people I spoke to around the time of learning who were always more than happy to help out.
- **What was the first Flash game you released, and on what site? What do you remember about its release?**
- These were mostly little test or learning projects that got blammed on Newgrounds. One or two made it through, but the very first Flash game I ever made (and I still have the .swf and .fla to this day) I never actually submitted. It was an extremely short “click and thing happens” game inspired by the Ray Series. My earliest submission on Newgrounds is a stupid little thing I put together in an evening with Jacek Zmarz (Zoy) in 2006.
- **What drew you to making Flash games specifically? Did other platforms like Shockwave, Unity, Java or so on carry any appeal?**
- **Did you work alone? If not, who did you work with, and how did you meet them?**
- I started off by working with artists and trying to code. I later switched around but always made things on my own to stay sharp and push myself to be able to make solo projects. I often met collaborators through advertisements I would post on the Mochi or Newgrounds forums. I think I met Peter Kohlberger (CKP Engine) on the FlashGameLicense forums, which was another great place to meet similarly motivated work partners.
- **Can you give me just a quick, point-by-point overview of how you**

developed games? The technical side of things purely - how you program for Flash, how you create resources like graphics & sound (if applicable), how functionality improved & things changed in later versions of Flash, anything you can think of that might be noteworthy or interesting to the nerdy-minded.

- As an artist I would often just create a set of movieclips with character or scene animations, set it up in a mock situation on the stage, give some intitial instructions and let the programmer do their thing! After that we send builds back and forth while I tweak and refine my values. My graphic libraries are always super neat. I have a specific naming convention I use and put things in categorised folders. A bit boring to read about perhaps, but a vital part of the process that helps me keep things organized when working on a project.
- **Were there any interesting technical challenges you had to face while making a game in Flash?**

- **What was the development community like? Any forums or boards or other sites that are worthy of mention?**
- I have to shout out the Mochi games forum. I met Nick (The Gun Game), Wayne Marsh (Bazooki, Once Upon A Life) and Danish Goel (Age of Wonder, Bobby Da Arrow) on that website. I still work regularly with Danish who has become a good friend, and I'm still in touch with Wayne. Nick seems pretty hard to get hold of!
- **Did you make games as a hobby, on the side, or a full time job? Did it ever get ‘serious’, and if so, when?**
- For me, I learned because I really wanted to make computer games. When I very first started with Flash I had no idea that you could even make money from it. That was such an alien concept. Eventually Flash did explode in popularity and I was lucky to be working on Flash games around the time this wave came. After The Gun Game's success, that's when I realized I had to think about the way I'm doing things a bit differently. It was – and still is – my favourite hobby, but now it's also a business. But that's the dream, so I can't complain if there are tiny bits of compromise that need to be made here and there.
- **What was your first “viral game”, what were the circumstances around it, and what was it like inside your head and on your site/portal entry when it did go viral?**
- My first big hit that went viral was The Gun Game. It came at a point in my life where I genuinely questioning my purpose. I used to live in the middle of nowhere, stacking shelves in a supermarket on the night shift. When I woke up, I would work on Flash games. When I came home from work, I would do the same. It was a miserable job, and I spent every minute there thinking about my flash games and every spare minute or day off working on them. When I think

about it now I can't believe how relentless I was. One night I decided I'd had enough and I walked out. At this point I wasn't very good at code and decided I'd try to get good at artwork instead while living off of my savings. I was making everything in Flash 8 with the line tool and using a mouse. I made a post on the now defunt Mochi forums looking for a coder and Nick got in touch with me. I sent him two very basic graphics of a fist and a hand holding a gun. We had some back and forth and Nick slammed it into box2d and made this really cool little physics sandbox. When he sent me the first demo I couldn't believe that I was working with this guy, and my art was doing those things. We put the game up on FlashGameLicense when it was done, and this was the first time I saw my games begin to attract genuinely significant bids. This is why I would always say Flash and the community around it changed my life; after I licensed that game, I made enough money to make up for the months I'd spent making games to that point, and I registered myself as self employed. That was in 2009, and to this day I'm still registered as a self employed game designer. The Gun Game not only put my work in front of millions of pairs of eyes, it also opened mine up to the possibilities of what I was capable of and it gave me immense confidence going forward. It's difficult when you are self taught in something I think to give yourself the credit you deserve, as more often than not when you come up through unconventional means you feel it lacks legitimacy. I think what I learned was that legitimacy means nothing over authenticy. I was still working from my bedroom at this point; we did make a sequel called The Gun Game 2 which done even better, but it was important to me to try and find a balance between making something people want or expect, and stayng true to some of the ideas I wanted to experiment with. You can see in the games that came after The Gun Game, I'm trying out new things and they're all a bit different from the last.

- **Did you ever have a strategy when making games, marketing or business wise? Or did you just work on what was fun?**
- The interesting thing was that every time you licensed a game, it would carry you through the development of the next one. So there was this perpetual cycle of trying to get out a new game regularly but make sure that it's new and fits a certain standard. Iny my situation I was really trying to be careful to balance commerciality with soul. You can see that I fell into a little bit of a rut making physics games, or a few games having quite similar styles. I did have to make sure that I made things that were safe, just so I could continue to have the ability to experiment too, but even in those situations I think I've added improvements or polish with each new iteration. Marketing I wasn't too interested about; I just wanted to keep making games, learning new things and always trrying to improve. A good Flash game would go viral whether it was marketed or not.
- **What was it like working with Flash portals like Kongregate? What sort**

of deals would you make, if any? Did you ever use something like Flash Game License, and if so, can you tell me about your experience with it?

- Flash games were generally licensed to websites by developers under one of a few types of license. Primary was the main license; sometimes this might be time-locked for say, 4 weeks, before the developer can post the game where they liked, or sell sitelocked licenses which were exclusive to the site licensing it. Exclusive licenses meant that once you licensed that game to a publisher, that was essentially where it ended in terms of options for selling extra licenses. Exclusive licenses more often than not commanded a higher up front price, and maybe had a rev-share model attached. Sometimes it required you to make a decision based on your faith in the game you had made. Some licensing models rewarded good performance, whereas a majority of licenses were more often than not hedging their bets across the board, hoping that if they sponsored lots of content, one of them would be a hit.
- **How much did the community support you, and how did they contribute to your success?**
- Newgrounds is sacred to me for this reason; if you needed help you could ask on the BBS and wait for an answer. As I mentioned before, sometimes you'd find someone willing to help over MSN messenger, who would explain things, send files back and forth. It was all very encouraging and fostered a spirit that I feel would be impossible to replicate if it wasn't coming from such an organic source of creativity. It was a great place to find a coder if you're making art, or an artist if you're a coder.
- **Were you around pre-and-post Macromedia era Flash? Are you able to draw a comparison between the two companies' handling of the technology?**
- To this day I create all of my artwork and animation in Macromedia Flash 8. To me it's perfect; it's super lightweight, it's intuitive and it works. I have tried the Adobe versions many times (I really don't like them), but the only reason I use them is for the ease of which I can right click a movieclip and export it as a .png sequence. Since the deprecation of the flash plugin, I make all my gamees in GameMaker Studio 2 now, so this allows me to easily import all of my Flash animations to my new game engine.
- **Do you think Adobe buying Flash at the end of the day caused more damage than it would have if Macromedia hadn't been bought out?**
- I think in terms of the technology, Adobe seems better placed to be able to continue it's legacy into the future. They can tie it into their suite of programs and because of this I think the functionality of Flash, which they now call Animate, has a longer shelf life. Macromedia perhaps would have died off if they were still holding the wheel when Flash plugin support ended, but that's not to say they wouldn't have been able to adapt it into something that worked in

today's industry. However, as long as Flash 8 exists, I'm more than happy! Macromedia Flash changed my life and continues to shape it.

The End of Days

- **At what point did Flash go into “freefall” in the public consciousness, in your point of view?**
- **Have you ever met anyone blatantly anti-Flash or anti-Flash games specifically? Did you try to change their mind? Were you successful?**
- **What didn’t you like about Flash as a platform, either during its peak or fall? Anything specifically egregious worth mentioning?**
- **Around what point did Flash stop becoming profitable and/or getting enough back to cover development time? Did this make you want to stop making Flash games?**
- **How many people were still playing your games at the end? Did you ever find out overall total player numbers? Any thoughts on those numbers?**
- **Any opinions on the state of the indie gamedev industry, and what it was like compared to Flash at its rise & peak?**
- **How do you feel about Flash having gone away from browsers? Do you miss it? What do you miss the most about it?**
- **If you could do it all again, would you?**
- 100%. I continue to do it now, I just build my games in a different engine. But they all have the heart of a lovingly crafted Flash game.
- **What have you been up to since Flash left the public consciousness?**
- I learnt how to use GameMaker Studio 2. I entered my first ever game jam (LD46) with my first ever game made with it and I got rated 3rd for fun and 6th overall from nearly 5,000 entries! I released a big asset pack called Graveyard Blast, which features a ton of frame by frame animations from a game that ultimately got abandoned. I've also teamed up with fellow Flash game veteran Gaz Thomas (Red Remover, Super Stacker) to create a game on the WAX blockchain that utilizes NFTs. You can check it out at CritterCraft.io – we have a Discord server too and we'd love anyone who is interested in seeing the sprit of Flash being brought forward in cutting edge ways to join us for the ride.
- **What do you think of efforts like AwayFL and Ruffle? Do you think they might recapture the magic of Flash in the browser if ever completed?**
- **Speaking of recapturing the magic, how do you feel about HTML5 games today?**
- **How can we play your games now that Flash has been exorcised from most browsers?**
- I have released a Pay What You Want collection on itch.io called The Skeleton Key. It is a collection of my curated games from the last few years of Flash dev,

and features some extra goodies and the standalone Flash player. As for my older games, it's probably better to try emulating them on any emulator plugins available.

- **Are you still using Flash for anything in particular today?**
- Yes, I use Macromedia Flash 8 for all my artwork, animation and design!
- **Anything else you want to say?**